

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a continuous strand mat, the strands coming from at least one roving thrown onto a conveyor belt, the method comprising:

paying-out a roving from at least one roving package supported on a spindle via the outside;, a rate of the pay-out being imposed solely by a motor unwinding the roving package such that the roving is unwound from the roving package and wherein the linear speed of the paid-out roving is constant; then

directing the roving in a downward vertical direction toward a nozzle, wherein the weight of the roving when directed in a downward vertical direction induces a tension on the roving;

passing the roving through a the nozzle, wherein the roving passes through an entry and then an exit of the nozzle, the nozzle also provided with a transverse injection of at least one fluid, the at least one fluid configured to divide the roving into strands, wherein the fluid is further configured to induce a downward tension on the strands; and, the at least one fluid being mainly introduced in a direction toward the exit of the nozzle, inducing a tension toward a bottom of the roving, the at least one fluid also dividing the roving; and then

throwing the strands forming the roving in an oscillatory movement onto the conveyor belt;

wherein the directing of the roving is carried out in the absence of tension inducing apparatus or process steps other than the tension induced in the roving caused by the combination of the at least one fluid and the weight of the roving when directed in a downward vertical direction.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein a speed of the roving paid out is measured by an encoder coupled to a pulley driven by the roving package.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the nozzle presents the at least one fluid with a higher head loss at the entry than at the exit.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the roving includes 2 to 50 strands.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the fluid has a pressure of between 2 and 10 bar.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the nozzle is also fed with water or with an aqueous solution or dispersion.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the tension in the roving between the nozzle and the package is between 50 and 200 grams.

19. (Withdrawn) An installation for manufacturing mats formed from continuous strands coming from roving packages and thrown onto a conveyor belt, comprising:

at least one roving package supported on a spindle;
means for paying out the roving coming from the package;
at least one nozzle through which the roving passes, by passing via an inlet and then an outlet of the nozzle, the nozzle also provided with a transverse injection of at

least one fluid, the at least one fluid being directed mainly toward the exit of the nozzle, so as to induce a tension in the roving toward the exit; and

means for throwing the strands forming the roving onto the conveyor belt.

20. (Withdrawn) The installation as claimed in claim 19, wherein a pulley is driven by the paid-out roving, and an encoder is coupled to the pulley measuring the speed of the roving.

21. (Withdrawn) The installation as claimed in claim 19, wherein the nozzle is supported by the means for throwing.

22. (Withdrawn) The installation as claimed in claim 19, including at least two roving packages, each associated with a nozzle.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (New) A method of preparing a continuous strand mat, the strands coming from at least one roving thrown onto a conveyor belt, the method consisting essentially of:

paying-out a roving from at least one roving package, the roving having a weight;

directing the roving in a downward vertical direction through a nozzle, the nozzle being provided with a transverse injection of at least one fluid configured to divide the roving into strands; and

throwing the strands forming the roving in an oscillatory movement onto the conveyor belt;

wherein a tension is induced on the roving from the weight of the roving when directed in a downward vertical direction and from the at least one fluid, the tension configured to allow the continuous strand mats to be manufactured with decreased roving breakage, and wherein the tension induced from the weight of the roving and the tension induced from the fluid are the only mechanisms applying tension to the roving.

25. (New) The method as claimed in claim 24 in which the at least one fluid has an adjustable pressure, wherein the adjustable pressure is adjusted to induce a desired tension on the roving.